

240 A Street,  
Davis, California,  
March 4, 1957.

Mrs. L. T. Gruner,  
1319 Buente Avenue,  
Burlingame, California.

Dear Mrs. Gruner:

I do not have definite answers for all the questions in your letter of February 15, but I will give you what information I have available.

You are correct in saying that the houseboat was at Burlingame. I was too young at that time to have first hand information as to what she used the houseboat for, but I doubt if she ever lived in it. During the period after the earthquake Mrs. Winchester came down to San Jose from time to time, and my father's records always mentioned Fair Oaks (later changed to Atherton).

I think that if you searched the records carefully you would find that Mrs. Winchester owned other property at Fair Oaks besides the house you mention. At any rate, my father's records of 1912 show that she was living at Fair Oaks except when she was at San Jose.

We know of the name Maunda Villa, but it certainly was not generally used.

James Bogie worked for Mrs. Winchester at Atherton, but I do not remember his exact duties. I have no recollection of the name Tamara Brown.

I have no record of my father's exact height, but I think it was about 5'9". I am certain, however, that he was taller than Mrs. Winchester.

The Carol family lived in the house you mention in your letter. It was a fairly large two-story house, but I do not remember as many as 9 rooms.

As Mrs. Hall indicated, Tammie Hinchman, the gardner, and his family lived across the road in a house owned by Mrs. Winchester.

In 1923 the Brown family moved into the part of the house where we lived. This was immediately to the west of the hall that you first enter after getting your ticket. We had 5 rooms on the first and second floors. They were ordinary rooms, notably furnished with our own furniture.

I am sorry, but I remember practically nothing about the houseboat.

Sincerely yours,

Carl J. Hansen



Friday, February 15, 1957

Professor Carl J. Hansen  
240 A Street  
Davis, California

Dear Professor Hansen:

Thank you so much for your kind and speedy reply to my letter of the 2nd. I agree with your opening comment that "much fiction has been written about Mrs. Winchester"; but I disagree with your premise that "people are not interested in the facts." The house draws over 50,000 sightseers each year, and they in turn tell their neighbors about it, and the neighbors want to see it, too. Thus, merely by word of mouth advertising, a steady stream of people pass through its doors. For my own part, I have been there four times, and I have yet to join a group following the guide, in which some one does not make the remark, "I wonder what she was really like."

I have been there so many times (and intend to go many times more) because I am striving for accuracy of detail, and because I am trying to visualize the place as it was when Mrs. Winchester was there; and not as it is shown today in the confusing and roundabout way of the tour, which I am sure is designed with the intent of making the place all the more mysterious.

I was interested in your comment that there were periods of several up to six years when she did no building at all, because it ties in with the statement Dean Jennings made in his article (Coronet, May, 1945) that after the earthquake she lived "for the next six years on a houseboat near Atherton, some thirty miles north." This is filled with obvious inaccuracies, since her houseboat was moored at the foot of Grove Street here in Burlingame which would be "some thirty miles north" and not Atherton. It also is evidently incorrect that she lived on the houseboat, since both you and Mrs. Hall maintain that she lived in her Atherton residence. However, this Atherton residence, known as Fair Oaks Villa was sold to Mrs. Delia Kleishacker on Nov. 2, 1911 (my authority for this statement is the deed on file in the San Mateo County Recorder's office in Redwood City.) Do you think that it would correct to assume that she then returned to the house near San Jose?

Was this house known as Llanada Villa when you lived there?

Do you know who James Bogie was? He was named in her will along with your father, Tommie Nishawara, Henrietta Sivera, Misa Hirata (named by Mrs. Winchester as "my Japanese maid") and others. Does the name Tasmara Breese mean anything to you?

I hope that you will bear with me and all of these questions, but there are so many that plague me. For instance, one of the stories is that because Mrs. Winchester was so very small herself, she would not hire tall people. Therefore, the obvious question in my mind is: "How tall was your father?"

I do not wish to be offensively "nosey" but in order to reconstruct the life of Llanada Villa as it once was lived, I have to ask the people who knew it. For instance, I have read that Mrs. Winchester built a nine-room residence for her coachman (this house burned down in 1928). Was this the home of the Carol family? Mrs. Hall said that the Nishiwara family lived across the road in a house owned by Mrs. Winchester. And you and your family lived in the big house....but where? Did you have a separate apartment in one of the wings, or a suite of rooms on the third floor? What did they look like? How were they furnished?

Do forgive me, if I am getting too personal; but I am so very eager for even the smallest detail. And I would so very much appreciate your taking the time from your busy schedule to give me whatever information you can recall.

Was there ever any talk that you can remember as to why she sold the houseboat to Henry Muggley "wealthy mining engineer of Los Angeles"; or as to how much he paid for it?

Sincerely yours,

*Bertha B. Cramer*

(Mrs.L.T.) Bertha B. Cramer  
1319 Benito Ave.,  
Burlingame, Cal.



240 A Street  
Davis, California  
February 7, 1957

Mrs. L. T. Craner  
1319 Benito Avenue  
Burlingame, Calif.

Dear Mrs. Craner:

So much fiction has been written about Mrs. Winchester that I am afraid most people are not interested in the facts. However, I will attempt to answer a few of the questions that you asked me in your letter of February 2.

My father worked for Mrs. Winchester for approximately 28 years, and I lived in the house from 1905 until 1923. I was rather young during part of this period, but I remember definitely that Mrs. Winchester spent the majority of her time at the Atherton house. However, the length of time she spent at San Jose varied considerably from year to year.

Mrs. Hall was correct in saying that only a part of the house was furnished. In addition to that in use, some furniture was in storage. I do not remember how many loads of furniture were taken out of the house but there is no doubt that the stories were greatly exaggerated.

Mrs. Winchester made a hobby of planning and building, and being a millionaire, she could afford to do it. However, she did not build continuously. There were periods of several up to about six years when she did no building at all. I am sure that she was not worried about anything happening to her if she stopped building.

I talked with Mrs. Winchester on only very rare occasions, but she seemed entirely normal to me. It is true that she kept pretty much to herself and did very little entertaining, but it seems to me that that was her privilege.

It would take hours to contradict all the wild tales that have been told about Mrs. Winchester, so I will close by saying that they are not true or have very simple explanations.

Sincerely yours,

Carl J. Hansen

February 2, 1957

Professor Carl Hansen  
Agricultural College  
Davis, Cal.

Dear Professor Hansen:

On Tuesday of this week I visited San Jose where I had the pleasure of talking with Mrs. Homer Hall (nee Minnie Yaeger) about the Winchester House and Mrs. Sarah Winchester, and Mrs. Hall suggested that I write to you for clarification of certain facts about which Mrs. Hall is not too certain.

I have, for the past five months, been doing research on the life of Mrs. Winchester for an article which I wish to write; but the task of unscrambling the facts from the fiction, is not only monumental, but oftentimes bewildering!

Mrs. Hall seems to think that Mrs. Winchester did not live in the big house, but in another residence of hers in Atherton. However, since hers <sup>^ Mrs. Hall's</sup> was the hazy recollection of a small child, she felt that yours would be more accurate. She stated that your father was the caretaker, and that you and your family lived in the big house; and that to the best of her recollection, there was very little furniture in the house (this, in contradiction to the story that "it took six van loads of furniture daily, for six weeks, to clear out the furniture.")

Would you be kind enough to tell me everything that you know or remember about Mrs. Winchester (dates would be particularly helpful)? Particularly pertaining to her building program (did she build "continuously"); the kind of person that she was (any anecdotes as to her sense of humour, kindness, sternness, or other which will help me to characterize her.)

I will be so very appreciative of any information which you can give me.

Sincerely yours,

*Bertha B. Cramer*

(Mrs. L.T.)

Bertha B. Cramer  
1319 Benito Ave.,  
Burlingame, Cal.